

**Man-Woman Complementarity: The Catholic Inspiration**  
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**Lecture III: Contemporary Challenges and Responses**

**Part I: Sr. Prudence Allen, RSM: Philosophical Aspects**

*"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end. Amen"*

max 2nd to lecture

At the end of our first lecture we discovered how the Catholic Inspiration for complementarity, emerged through an understanding of the effects of Baptism in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and how it was further articulated in the 12<sup>th</sup> century in the Benedictine monastic tradition. Next we saw how in the 13<sup>th</sup> century an emerging complementarity was overcome by a scholastic-Aristotelian institutionalization of sex and gender polarity. When equal dignity and worth of women and men was lost their significant differentiation was distorted into a polarity claim that man was by nature superior to woman.

At the end of our second lecture we discovered how the Catholic Inspiration for complementarity emerged again in the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries within the Renaissance humanist tradition, in its support for the dignity of woman and of the Sacrament of marriage. Then we observed how those grounds for complementarity was overcome by a 17<sup>th</sup> century Cartesian-based model giving priority to a sexless mind. This model had the great advantage of

defending the factor of equal dignity and worth of man and woman, and it led to significant advances in proposals for women's education and participation in broader society. However, this unisex model lost the factor of significant differentiation by its complete rejection of the human body. In the meantime, the Catholic inspiration towards an integral complementarity began to be quietly worked out by individual religious men and religious women who organized the society around them by working together in complementary relations in the missionary activities for higher education and to support marriage and the family.

We also saw how new forms of fractional complementarity emerged especially in the Protestant tradition, in which the mind was divided into two aspects and sex and gender differentiation associated with one or the other aspect. This period ended with a movement towards a deeper articulation of fractional complementarity in the work of Mill and Taylor with the concomitant defense of woman suffrage.

In 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century post-enlightenment theories of sex and gender identity (other than fractional complementarity or the mind with a hidden polarity) also defended a unisex theory with new foundations. This kind of formulation is found in secular humanist pragmatism, deriving from the English philosophers Locke and Schiller and incorporated into contemporary American philosophy of NOW (National Organization of Women). This unisex option was also promoted by the German philosophers Engles and Marx. While secular humanist theories used a unisex model to promote individualism, marxist theories used the unisex model to promote collectivism. In both cases, significant differences between men and women are lost along with its significance for integral complementarity. In one of its most extreme formulations incorporating both marxist and feminist ideology, Shulamith Firestone

argued in *The Dialectic of Sex* that true equality of men and women will occur only after all babies are developed outside the female body.<sup>1</sup>

Another trend in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century was the articulation of new foundations for sex and gender polarity. From the time of Aristotle, gender polarity theories have always selected out one significant aspect of the body and made it the determining factor in the evaluation of the male as superior to the female. Aristotle's focus on the greater heat which produced fertility of seed in the male, was accepted by Albert, Giles, and many other polarity theorists until disproved. However, new bodily factors were identified in more recent times. Sigmund Freud argued that the male anatomy was superior to the female anatomy, and Lionel Tiger argued that the hormone testosterone in the male, because it led to bonding, was superior than the female hormone. Jean Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir seemed to agree that the female body was the source for woman's being consistently made the "other" in a world in which the transcendence of the 'for-itself' had the greater value.

Still another trend in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century is a series of theories promoting a reverse sex and gender polarity, that is, the superiority of the female over the male. Just as in traditional polarity selected out a single prioritized characteristic of the male body, so reverse sex and gender polarity selects out a single prioritized characteristic of the female body. Some examples are Valerie Solanis' claim that the chromosome xx is stronger than the xy, the generalized claim that woman's capacity for giving birth is greater than man's begetting, and even that the hormone estrogen is better than testosterone and that its greater amount in women

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<sup>1</sup> Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex* ( )

<sup>the men.</sup>  
explain why women don't start wars and why women are more caring. The return to goddess worship and forms of pantheism focusing on love for mother earth are all developments of a reverse sex and gender polarity attitude.

When we think back to the second lecture, and the hope that seem to rise up for equal dignity and equal access to education, participation in the broader society, and to work, it becomes apparent, that many of the theories just noted rose up because these hopes were not fulfilled by a change in the structure of society. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, women generally did not have equal access to higher education, to voting (to say nothing of participating as elected representatives in government) and to the same variety of jobs to which men had access. As a consequence, various theories of man-woman relations began to spin out into hostile acts towards various groups of people because they were viewed as an enemy in the way of the accomplishment of the hoped-for equality. So for Marxists the wealthy were the enemy, for secular humanists, men or women competing for the same jobs and unborn children became perceived as the enemy, and for reverse polarity theorists men are perceived as the enemy.

Even existentialists like Sartre and deBeauvoir, who had publically repudiated their baptism in the Catholic faith, began to see 'the anonymous other' as their enemy, with Sartre suggesting in his play *No Exit* that hell is other people.

From the perspective of the infusion of the theological virtues at Baptism, this means <sup>Superior</sup> that the virtue of charity was severely limited in all of the above mentioned 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century theories of man-woman relations. This was the stark reality that faced several Catholic philosophers in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was in this context that the Catholic Inspiration

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towards an integral complementarity between men and women emerged once again. It surfaced again in a dynamic and new form, through its philosophical roots in religious existentialism, personalism, and phenomenology. It needed the existential claim that a man and a woman are personally responsible for co-creating their unique identity as a man or as a woman in cooperation with God. It needed a claim of philosophical anthropology, which viewed the human person metaphysically as a composit mind/body unity. And it needed a place to integrate the lived experience of the body, as discovered by phenomenology.

Ironically, the existentialist factor was taken from the insight of Pico, the neoplatonist renaissance philosopher who understood that an aspect of the great source of human dignity was the exercise of the free will in cooperation of God in particular self development. The 19<sup>th</sup> century existentialist Kierkegaard further elaborated on it. The metaphysical foundation was taken from the Aristotelian and Scholastic hylemorphic theory of the composit identity of human being, and the phenomenology of the lived experience of the body from its Cartesian *came* focus on a scientific study of the content of consciousness and its development in the Jewish tradition of dialogue articulated by Martin Buber and the Christian convert Edmund Husserl, *and founder of phenomenology* (the founder of phenomenology.)

However, it took the work of several Catholic philosophers to put it all together into a new personalist philosophy of man-woman. First, I will offer a few reflections on how it happened, and second, I will *give* conclude with a brief description of its components as more formally articulated by John Paul II. It actually began with the phenomenological wing in Germany, through the work of St. Edith Stein who, after converting from Judaism had been *around 1928* gave giving public lectures in Germany and Switzerland on women's emancipation and the women's



movement since 1928.<sup>2</sup> In her lectures, <sup>Stein</sup> she identified some significant differences between a woman's and a man's experience of the body. While many of these we would today evaluate as being cultural, and indeed stereotypical in origin, Stein discovered one that seems to have a deeper ontological root, namely, that a woman's body is oriented towards fostering a whole life within, while a man's body generates by detachment without. <sup>I & her</sup> ~~From this~~ phenomenological <sup>elaboration</sup> discovery, Stein developed a theory that a man needed to learn from a woman how to relate to the whole and the woman needed to learn from the man how to detach herself. Thus, for Stein, the will entered into self-development along existential lines, but the starting point was significantly different for woman and for man.

The existential root emphasized this aspect of the will, in claiming that persons<sup>a</sup> had to choose to develop the self as a unique and unrepeatable kind of man or woman in cooperation with God. As early as 1919 the Jewish existentialist philosopher Martin Buber had emphasized the interpersonal nature of dialogue among human beings and with God, and the relation of person and community, in early drafts of *I and Thou*.<sup>3</sup> Buber argued that true community of persons is established not through the feelings or experiences one person has for another, but rather : "...all of them have to stand in a living reciprocal relationship to a single living center, and they have to stand in a living, reciprocal relationship to one another."<sup>4</sup> In 1934 Edith Stein wrote in her autobiography that she had from 1916 on been working on "...something which

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<sup>2</sup> Edith Stein, *Woman* (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1987).

<sup>3</sup> Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Charles Scribners, 1970).

<sup>4</sup> Buber, *I and Thou*, 94.

was personally close to my heart and which continually occupied me anew in all later works: the constitution of the human person."<sup>5</sup> It seems, then, that both the phenomenological and existential roots for the Catholic inspiration for a new personalism came partly from Jewish/Christian German philosophers.

The other part came from an extraordinary intersection of Catholic and Orthodox philosophers 1932, when in Paris, France Emmanuel Mounier and Jacques Maritain founded the personalist review *Esprit*. By 1934 Mounier and Maritain were meeting regularly together with Gabriel Marcel and Nicholae Berdjaev in a philosophy discussion group in Paris. Together they published a "Personalist Manifesto" which contained the first public articulation of a new personalist humanism.

This movement to establish new philosophical foundations for Catholic action did not remain isolated in France, for in 1934 Mounier published an article in the Polish review (*Wiadomosci Literackie*) explaining what was happening in France in the personalist movement; and Jacques Maritain delivered a series of six lectures at the University of Santandar, Spain on this new personalism.<sup>6</sup> The personalist manifesto was translated into Polish and distributed underground in Poland during World War II, and as soon as the war was over, in May 1946 Mounier was invited to lecture at Krakow Jagallonian university <sup>ماتيني</sup> when Karol Wojtyla was a new seminarian studying there. It is not surprising then that in the summer of 1947, when Wojtyla was studying in Rome, he went to France to study the worker-

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<sup>5</sup> Edith Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family*, (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1986), 197.

<sup>6</sup> These were published in book form in Paris in 1936 under the title of *Humanism Intégral* (Integral or True Humanism in English publications).

priest movement. John Paul II tells us directly in *Gift and Mystery* that "My formation within the cultural horizon of personalism also gave me a deeper awareness of how each individual is a unique person."<sup>7</sup> This uniqueness is a potentiality to be developed through human acts in cooperation with grace through <sup>cut</sup> the <sup>a</sup> life of the woman or man.

The connection between personalism and integral complementarity of man-woman relations was very close. <sup>as early as</sup> In 1933 Edith Stein had met with Jacques and Raissa Maritain in a philosophy discussion group in Juvisy, for she wrote a letter thanking them for the gift of a book.<sup>8</sup> Then by, 1936 Mounier published in *Esprit* the first article focusing on the relation between personalism and woman's identity, entitled "La femme aussi est une personne."<sup>9</sup> In another interesting coincidence, Roman Ingarden, who was Edith Stein's close friend and frequent correspondent as a graduate student when she was studying for her doctorate under Husserl, later served as Karol Wojtyla's dissertation reader as a professor of philosophy at the University of Cracow. Thus, it is likely that the fertile ground for the new Catholic Inspiration for Integral Complementarity was the actual interaction of men and women with the phenomenological and personalist movements.

The new Catholic Inspiration for integral complementarity has several aspects. Karol Wojtyla, first in *Love and Responsibility* and *The Acting Person*, and second in his pastoral writings as John Paul II has elaborated <sup>at least</sup> all four dimensions. The most notable texts are his

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<sup>7</sup> John Paul II, *Gift and Mystery: On the Fiftieth Anniversary of My Priestly Ordination* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), p. 94.

<sup>8</sup> Edith Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters* (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1993), 146.

<sup>9</sup> Emmanuel Mounier, *Esprit* (June 1936): 292-297.



Wednesday night audiences on Genesis (1979-1981), entitled The Unity of Man and Woman, his Apostolic Letter, Mulieris Dignitatem (On the Dignity and Vocation of Woman) (1988), and 1995 writings on the Genius of Woman and the New Feminism related to the UN Conference on Women in Beijing. (Genesys Life #99)

John Paul II defends the three fundamental factors of integral complementarity: equal dignity and worth, significant differentiation, and relation or union. Equal dignity and worth is defended in Mulieris Dignitatem where he states: "Both man and woman are human beings to an equal degree, both are created in God's image; and "Man is a person, man and woman equally so, since both were created in the image and likeness of the personal God."<sup>10</sup> He concludes that men and women are simply two ways of being human persons. we have identified

In his audiences on Genesis the pope offered a new interpretation of the creation accounts, arguing that the original Adam represented a solitary human being, who, after he fell asleep woke up male and female. This interpretation brought an equal dignity and worth back in to the polarity interpretation which had devalued woman born from a man's side, from the reverse polarity argument of Agrippa which had exalted woman as the last in the order of creation, and from the unisex argument of Erigena which interpreted sex identity as a result of the Fall. (2-m man original creation)

In addition, John Paul II argued against the traditional polarity interpretation of the Fall which suggested that woman was placed in a position of obedience under man because she had caused Adam to sin. Again he brings a fundamental equality back into the relationship when he

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<sup>10</sup> John Paul II., *Mulieris Dignitatem* (Boston: St. Paul Books and Media, 1988), #6.

states several times that there must be “a mutual subjection out of reverence for Christ.”<sup>11</sup> In fact, he calls this “the gospel innovation” and forcefully associates it with the Redemption of Christ:

the awareness that in marriage there is a mutual “subjection of the spouses out of reverence for Christ,” and not just that of the wife to the husband, must gradually establish itself in hearts, consciences, behavior and customs. This is a call which from that time onwards does not cease to challenge succeeding generations: it is a call which people have to accept ever anew.<sup>12</sup>

The pope’s Catholic Inspiration states unequivocally that the traditional polarity distortion common to the past must be overcome by the Redemptive action of Christ which always brings about a respect for the fundamental dignity and worth of both men and women.

John Paul II also confronts the hidden sex polarity in many fractional complementarity views. He does this more by what he does not say than by what he says. To be more specific, we saw that in many fractional theories, various stereotyped qualities were associated with one sex or the other. Sometimes they are mental qualities, like intuition or rational thinking, and other times they are broader like gentleness or strength. Even St. Edith Stein’s theory contained several of these masculine or feminine qualities, although she argued that a woman ought to develop the complement masculine qualities and a man ought to develop the complement feminine qualities. They just started at a different place, with respect to their male or female psychic-biological nature. The pope, on the other hand, assiduously avoids writing or speaking about masculine or feminine qualities. Instead, he says that a woman’s way of

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<sup>11</sup> John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem* #24.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

acting in the world is her femininity and a man's way of acting in the world is his masculinity. Thus, he avoids altogether the problem of cultural relativism and situations once again men and women as equal persons engaged in the world.

When we turn to the second factor, or significant differentiation, we discover the pope supporting the Catholic Inspiration for integral complementarity against the distortion of unisex. Significant differentiation between men and women is identified by Pope John Paul as being ontological, rooted in their very being as a human persons. In his *Letter to Women* (#7) the Pope states that: "Womanhood and manhood are complementarity *not only from the physical and psychological points of view, but also from the ontological.*"

The ontological significant difference in a woman's and a man's identity can be analyzed through four different aspects, ~~although it is integral to the ontological identity of a man or a woman.~~ In his public statements before the UN Conference on Women in Beijing John Paul II claimed that: "Women and men are the illustration of a *biological, individual, personal and spiritual complementarity.*"<sup>13</sup> This complementarity is always of an integral man and integral woman and not as fractional parts of a man and a woman who in relation make up only a 'single human being.' In his World Day of Peace Message (1995), the pope makes his rejection of fractional complementarity explicit:

Even though man and woman are made for each other, this does not mean that God created them incomplete. God "created them to be a communion of persons, in which each can be a 'helpmate' to the other, for they are equal as persons ('bone of my bones')

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<sup>13</sup> John Paul II, *Holy See's Position Paper for Beijing 1.1*. See also Sr. Prudence Allen, "Integral Sex Complementarity and the Theology of Communion *Communio* 17 (winter 1990): 523-544.

ways of being persons?

and complementary as masculine and feminine." Reciprocity and complementarity are the two fundamental characteristics of the human couple.<sup>14</sup>

Once the principle of integral unity has been accepted, then we can turn to consider very briefly each of the four aspects through which ontological complementarity can be analyzed. This will help illustrate how individual men and women are called to live out their complementarity in the Church and in the world.

### Biological Complementarity

Karol Wojtyla follows Edith Stein's lead her in identifying something unique in woman's biological nature, that the lived experience of the body gives her an orientation to receive a new life. In Love and Responsibility Wojtyla suggested that woman's lived experience from puberty to menopause of the biochemical changes occurring especially during ovulation in her monthly cycles is "the origin of the maternal instinct" or the natural orientation of woman towards another human being.<sup>15</sup> This disposition is not a biological determinism, but rather an inclination or tendency that can be strengthened by actually becoming pregnant, giving birth, and accepting the new life entrusted to her.

The pope argues further that a man does not have this relation to new life, and that he has to learn to be a father through the woman's lead:

The unique contact with the new human being developing within her gives rise to an attitude towards human beings—not only towards her own child, but every human

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<sup>14</sup> John Paul II, World Day of Peace Message, 1995 in *The Genius of Women* (US Bishops Conference, 1997), #3.

<sup>15</sup> Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, 280.

being—which profoundly marks the woman's personality. It is commonly thought that women are more capable than men of paying attention to another person, and that motherhood develops this predisposition even more. The man—even with all his sharing in parenthood—remains "outside" the process of pregnancy and the baby's birth; in many ways he has to learn his own "fatherhood" from the mother.<sup>16</sup>

Clearly this does not imply that men do not pay attention to other persons, or that women always do, but just that they have a different biological starting point for the development of their personality. For the relation of the biological aspect of complementarity to its individual aspect, acts of the human will must be factored in.



### **Individual Complementarity:**

In his book *The Acting Person* Karol Wojtyla notes a difference between a biological experience of something happening in the self, and an experience of self-determination as an individual: "The first definition of self-determination in the experience of human action involves a sense of efficacy ... : 'I act' means 'I am the efficient cause' of my action and of my self-actualization as a subject, which is not the case when something merely 'happens in me.'<sup>17</sup> Thus, each woman and each man must act in relation to what happens in them. A woman can act against her identity through choosing an abortion, a man by choosing a vasectomy. Or they can choose to govern and regulate their reproductive potentiality each according to their respective identities. It is through multiple decisions and acts that they

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<sup>16</sup> *Mulieris dignitatem* #18.

<sup>17</sup> Wojtyla, "The Personal Structure of Self-Determination," in *Person and Community*, 189.



actualize the self as a particular kind of man or a particular kind of woman.

In another way, a man must decide which characteristics of his father or other men in his culture he would like to integrate into his own personality, and a woman must decide analogously about what kind of woman she wants to be. We observe adolescent boys and girls working this through daily in their lives. <sup>Th 48</sup> This, to become in some sense a self-defined individual, the person as man or woman makes multiple acts of will which either go against or harmonize with their dispositions or natural preferences. Ultimately an integral complementarity demands self-governance and self-creation in union with God. It also involves the interpersonal dynamic of personal identity.

*Other wise it remains locked in an egotistical form of self-lace.*

### **Personal Complementarity**

To be a person means for John Paul II to be open and available to receiving another person. In *Mulieris Dignitatem*, the Pope refers to Vatican II (*Gaudium et spes* #24) to reiterate his acceptance of what distinguishes personal identity: "The human being is a person, a subject who decides for himself. At the same time, man "cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self." <sup>18</sup> In his own words, "This 'law of the gift' ... is inscribed deep within the dynamic structure of the person." <sup>19</sup>

Creativity, in a personal-ethical sense, involves acts of intellect and will, of knowing and loving, on the part of a mother. <sup>another</sup> "In this openness, in conceiving and giving birth to a daughter who becomes a mother!"

<sup>18</sup> John Paul II, *Mulieris dignitatem* #18.

<sup>19</sup> Wojtyla, "The Personal Structure of Self-Determination," in *Person and Community*, 194.

child, the woman "discovers herself through a sincere gift of self."<sup>20</sup> This is not a biological or even an individual aspect of woman's identity: "Motherhood is linked to the personal structure of the woman and to the personal dimension of the gift."<sup>21</sup>

In a complementarity way, like St. Joseph, men must personally adopt the new life that is entrusted to them. In so acting the man acts to become fulfilled as a father. In his text on *St. Joseph Guardian of the Redeemer*, John Paul II states:

From the beginning Joseph accepted with the 'obedience of faith' his human fatherhood over Jesus. And thus, following the light of the Holy Spirit who gives himself to human beings through faith, he certainly came to discover ever more fully the indescribable gift that was his human fatherhood.<sup>22</sup>

As the pope suggests, a man becomes fulfilled by discovering his fatherhood, and a woman by discovering her motherhood. John Paul II suggests in his discussions of motherhood and fatherhood that the more they participate in the nature of personal acts of women and of men, the more closely they approximate the Primary Paternity of God, the Father. In women this takes the direction of fostering the full development of the persons entrusted to them, and in men this takes the direction of protecting, providing, and suffering for those entrusted to them.

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### Spiritual Complementarity

The Catholic Church teaches that each human person is on a journey from God's

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., #18.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. His emphasis.

<sup>22</sup> John Paul II, *St. Joseph Guardian of the Redeemer* (Boston: Media Books, 1989), #20. See also, Sr. Prudence Allen, RSM, "Freedom and the Fatherhood of Priests," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* (January 2002): 18-27.

original creation of his or her unique and unrepeatable eternal soul, and towards ultimate union with God and the communion of saints after death. We are on a pilgrimage together with other men and women, and <sup>an</sup> it will reach ~~its~~ <sup>our</sup> destiny one day. John Paul II offers three ways in which the spiritual aspects of integral gender complementarity reveals itself on this pilgrimage.

First, there is a Divine source for the fact that "God entrusts the human being to [a woman] ... in a special way"<sup>23</sup> She can fulfil her personal destiny of movement towards union with God by choosing to live in conformity the Divine source of this gift. The Pope notes that "A woman is strong because of her awareness of this entrusting, strong because of the fact that God "entrusts the human being to her," always and in every way, even in the situations of social discrimination in which she may find herself."<sup>24</sup> The genius of woman is identified by the pope as the multiple ingenious ways in which individual women chose to live out this entrustment.

John Paul extends this notion of entrusting to the wider society, especially for the lay <sup>in Gospel of Luke 99.</sup> vocation, in developing what he calls a "new feminism." He lists several areas in which the capacity of women to receive another person and give herself to another person can transform the world. In his *Letter to Women* he says that the greater presence of women in society will lead to a humanization of institutions organized "according to the criteria of efficiency and productivity."<sup>25</sup> He states further in an Angelus reflection (August 29, 1995), that the greater

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<sup>23</sup> John Paul II, *Mulieris dignitatem* #30.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> John Paul II, *Letter to Women* #4.

presence of business women in executive positions in the economy, is "giving it a new human inspiration and removing it from the recurring temptation of dull efficiency marked only by laws of profit."<sup>26</sup>

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from EU #99* In fact, he argues that this attention to the other person is a central aspect of the genius of women. It is manifesting itself in politics, where women are both focusing on "basic areas of human life" and "on behalf of peace."<sup>27</sup> Woman's genius also extends throughout wide areas of society. John Paul II notes "that women's contribution to the welfare and progress of society is incalculable...[and even more needed] to save society from the deadly virus of degradation and violence which is today witnessing a dramatic increase."<sup>28</sup> He asks that women's genius be "more fully expressed in the life of society as a whole," and that "the widest possible space [be] open to women in all areas of culture, economics, [and] politics..."<sup>29</sup>

While he does not explicitly describe the genius of men as such, it appears to be present in all of his works from the beginning in the notion of the human person whose genius creates the advancement of culture. In Gaudium et spes, which Karol Wojtyla helped draft, culture is defined as "all those things which go to the refining and developing of man's diverse mental and physical endowments."<sup>30</sup> It includes such examples as physical labor to subdue the earth, civic life, customs and institutions, technology, spiritual aspirations, communications, laws,

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<sup>26</sup> *Genius of Women*, p. 32, #1.

<sup>27</sup> *Mulieris dignitatem* #1 and 2, p. 34.

<sup>28</sup> *Genius of Women*, p. 41, #5.

<sup>29</sup> *Letter to Women* #10, in *Genius of Women*, p. 54 and also p. 27, #1.

<sup>30</sup> *Gaudium et spes*, chapter II, #53.

the arts, and so on. St Edith Stein had noted that men tended to demonstrate their genius through specialized areas of expertise, while women tended to focus more on integrating the whole. These basic tendencies associated with man's and woman's way of engaging in the world needed to be interfaced for the good of the whole.

A second spiritual aspect of integral complementarity is found in men and women who follow the commandment of love and law of reciprocity. The ultimate source of this norm is not some rational principle but the teachings of Jesus Christ, who revealed the will of the Father during his time on earth. In *Evangelium vitae* John Paul II traces the historical development of the law of the Old and New Covenant which "has entrusted the life of every individual to his or her fellow human beings, brothers and sisters, according to the law of reciprocity in giving and receiving, or self giving and of the acceptance of others."<sup>31</sup> Jesus Christ, in the witness of his life on earth, "showed what heights and depths this law of reciprocity can reach."<sup>32</sup> Now through the Holy Spirit, "Christ gives new content and meaning to the law of reciprocity, to our being entrusted to one another."<sup>33</sup>

Not only are individual men and women created in the image of God with intellect and

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<sup>31</sup> John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae* #76. John Paul II states in *Dives et misericordia* (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1980) that "the original anthropomorphic aspect" of the word used in the Old Testament for mercy "(*rahamim*) in its very root, *denotes the love of a mother (rehem= mother's womb)*. From the deep and original bond -- indeed the unity-- that links a mother to her child there springs a particular relationship to the child, a particular love...it constitutes an interior necessity: an exigency of the heart. It is, as it were, a 'feminine' variation of the masculine fidelity to self expressed by *hesed*." , note 52.

<sup>32</sup> John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae* #76.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.



will and an eternal destination for union, but they are also called together to grow in love and mutual self-gift in likeness of the Three Divine Persons in the Holy Trinity. Thus, just a men and women are a gift to one another in marriage, <sup>also</sup> so the different vocations to the laity, Consecrated Life, and Sacramental Priesthood are gifts to one another in likeness of the Divine Persons in a communion of love in the Holy Trinity.

In *Fides et ratio*, which describes the complementarity roles of faith and reason in the search for fulfilment, John Paul II notes the inner momentum that drives a person towards the ultimate goal:

From all that I have said to this point it emerges that men and women are on a journey of discovery which is humanly unstoppable — a search for the truth and a search for a person to whom they might entrust themselves. Christian faith comes to meet them, offering the concrete possibility of reaching the goal which they seek.<sup>34</sup>

In *Mulieris Dignitatem* he states that human dignity “is measured by the order of love, which is essentially the order of justice and charity.”<sup>35</sup> He affirms the foundation of the commandment of love: “Love is an ontological and ethical requirement of the person. The person must be loved, since love alone corresponds to what the person is.”<sup>36</sup>

Thus, we can see that in contrast to several other 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> philosophies of man-woman relation (traditional polarities, reverse polarities, fractional complementarities, or unisex) the Catholic Inspiration for integral complementarity never isolates a group of persons or individuals as an enemy to be destroyed. Since each man and woman is measured by the

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<sup>34</sup> *Fides et ratio* #33.

<sup>35</sup> *Mulieris dignitatem* #29. His emphasis.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

commandment of love, of charity, and of justice, the call is to receive and foster the growth of each person entrusted to the self integrally. Karol Wojtyla pointed out in *Love and Responsibility* the fact that in the fallen condition men tended to use a woman out of sensual attraction and that women tended to use a man out of sentimental need for affection. In a similar way, John Paul II notes in his audiences on *Genesis* that one result of the Fall is that a man tends to dominate a woman, while a woman's desire is to possess the one she loves. These basic tendencies towards a hedonistic and utilitarian rather than personalistic foundation for love are what need to be measured against Christ's commandment and his invitation to Redemption. Jesus Christ truly reveals us to our selves, <sup>He</sup> shows us how to grow in true Christian charity.

Acts of love may be done by the personal choice of will and intellect, but they also have their inspiration and source in the Holy Spirit which prompts a person to imitate Jesus Christ. We love others because we have been loved first. Only by entering into a full relation with others by acting according to the commandment of love and the law of reciprocity, will a man or a woman find fulfilment and perfection: "This ontological affirmation also indicates the ethical dimension of a person's vocation. Woman [or man] can only find ... the self by giving love to others."<sup>37</sup>

*They also also often inspired by the habitual participation in the sacramental life of the Church*  
*Charity at Baptism - as a potentiality that must be actualized - 3*

<sup>37</sup> *Mulieris dignitatem* #30. The Pope has recently recognized four Christian women whose lives expressed the genius of Christian feminism. St. Terese of Lisieux, named Doctor of the Church, revealed how the strengthened will could support a vigorous contemplative love at the heart of the Church, St. Edith Stein revealed how a sharpened intellect could support a martyr's gift of life in love, Mother Teresa of Calcutta revealed how an increase of love for the poorest of the poor could transform countries around the world, and Blessed Gianna revealed how an increase of love for just one unborn child could witness to a mother's gift of life.

**Second Part: Theological Aspects Sr. Moira Debono, RSM**

**Sacrament of Holy Orders and Sacrament of the Eucharist**